

INL brightens holiday season through community programs

Every year, Idaho National Laboratory and U.S. Department of Energy employees donate time, money and gifts to help brighten Christmas for eastern Idaho families in need. In 2007, myriad charity projects contributed food, gifts and donations totaling nearly \$20,000 and helping more than 300 individual families.

INL employees "adopted" 250 children by purchasing gifts for them through the Salvation Army's Angel Tree program this year. Often, these are the only gifts these children will receive. INL also provided \$4,300 toward the Christmas for Families program to help purchase food baskets and gifts for 76 families in need. The employees at the DOE's Idaho Operations Office purchased gifts, food boxes and gift cards for eight additional families through this program and for 16 low income senior citizens through the Eastern Idaho Community Action Program's "Santa for Seniors" program.

A food drive for the Idaho Falls Food Bank collected cans of food and over \$12,000 in cash. The effort organized by the License to Lead Class 2 team will help feed many hungry families in our community and the surrounding area.

Employees also donated more than 30 large Hefty bags of stuffed animals and dolls for a Team INL "New and Good-as-New" stuffed animal and doll drive. The items were handed out to people Christmas shopping at Deseret Industries in Idaho Falls.

INL also donated: \$1,000 to the Idaho Falls Soup Kitchen to help provide food and toys to the less fortunate; \$1,000 to St. Vincent de Paul's Christmas basket program, which makes Christmas happen for over 1,200 needy children; and \$500 to Butte County's Wish Upon a Star program, which provides Christmas for needy children in its area.

DOE volunteers worked at the Idaho Falls Soup Kitchen on December 1, 2007 and plan to continue helping at the kitchen throughout 2008.

Additionally, INL leadership and communications teams took turns ringing Salvation Army bells at Sam's Club from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Dec. 15. The Team INL bucket brought in \$819, a 2007 season record as of Dec. 17, according to the Salvation Army office.

Team INL also provided Christmas for three families at the Haven Shelter.

The needs of our communities are great but the generosity of the INL employees proves they are up to the task. May yours be merry and bright!

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INL Deputy for Management Juan Alvarez and his wife Kelly take time to help with the Team INL Salvation Army Bell Ringing campaign.

Overflowing boxes of items received as part of the Team INL New and "Good as New Stuffed Animals and Dolls" project.